

VILAS COUNTY FORESTRY, RECREATION, & LAND DEPARTMENT



Vilas County Forestry, Recreation & Land Committee

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49 **Vilas County Forest Administrators Grant**

50 **2020 Work Plan**

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53 **Forest Acres: Regular Entry Acres 41,078.62; Special Acres 62.79; Total Acres 41,141.41**

54
55 OUR MISSION

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57 Natural resources, such as those provided by the County Forest, are the base for addressing the
58 ecological and socioeconomic needs of society. The mission of the County Forest is to manage,
59 conserve, and protect these resources on a sustainable basis for present and future generations.

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61 The County Forest resources should be protected from natural catastrophes such as fire, insect
62 and disease outbreaks; and from human threats such as encroachment, over-utilization,
63 environmental degradation and excessive development. While managed for environmental needs
64 including watershed protection, protection of rare plant and animal communities and
65 maintenance of plant and animal diversity, these same resources must also be managed and
66 provide for sociological needs, including provisions for recreational opportunities and the
67 production of raw materials for wood-using industries.

68
69 Management must balance local needs with broader state, national, and global concerns through
70 integration of sound forestry, wildlife, fisheries, endangered resources, water quality, soil, and
71 recreational practices. Management will provide this variety of products and amenities for the
72 future using sustainable forest management practices.

73
74 DESIRED FUTURE FOREST CONDITIONS

75
76 In general, the Vilas County Forest plan is to maintain the current distribution of forest cover
77 types as they exist now. However, there will be changes in the acreage of some cover types. Age
78 class distribution will change to be more diverse as the Forest moves toward regulation of the
79 annual allowable harvest of the different cover types. The annual allowable harvest on the Vilas
80 County Forest for the next 15-year period is approximately 1,057 acres per year. The minor
81 changes in forest type acreage will primarily occur in the Aspen, Oak, and Pine cover types. The
82 Aspen type will decrease slightly as the Pine types increase.

83
84 Aspen is the most abundant timber type on the Vilas County Forest, occupying 13,562 acres.
85 The Aspen stands managed today are second-generation Aspen stands with first generation
86 origins from logging and wildfires of the late 1800's through the early 1900's. Because Aspen
87 provides habitat values to a wide variety of wildlife and is an important species for the wood
88 products industry, the Vilas County Forest is committed to maintaining a large percentage of its
89 Aspen acreage. However, there will be opportunities during harvest planning and natural events
90 to convert a portion of the Aspen cover type to other forest cover types through natural or
91 artificial regeneration techniques. These conversion opportunities will be considered on a case-
92 by-case basis. Conversion activities could affect approximately 650 acres or 5 percent of the
93 Aspen cover type over the next 10-15 years. The Oak, Jack Pine, Red Pine, and White Pine
94 forest cover types will benefit the most from these conversion activities.

Wisconsin's Wildlife Action Plan identifies several broad conservation actions for forest communities located within the Northern Highland Ecological Landscape. One of the broad ecological opportunities identified within this Ecological Landscape includes increasing the representation of Red and White Pine forests. Most of the Vilas County Forest lies within this Ecological Landscape, as Vilas County was once part of the 'Great Pinery'. One of the goals of conversion is to look for opportunities to increase the forest cover type of pines. Conversion of Aspen to pine could increase the forest cover type of pines by as much as 350-acres over the next 10-15 years.

Vilas County intends to maintain or slightly increase the current acres of Oak type on the County Forest. Currently only 7% of the forest acreage is Oak type (2,689 acres). Conversion from Aspen to Oak could increase the Oak forest cover type on the County Forest by as much as 300 acres. The Oak Forest Cover type consists primarily of two different Oak types; Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) on higher quality sites and habitat types, and Northern Pin Oak (*Q. ellipsoidalis*) on sandy soils and poorer habitat types. The general management objective within the Oak types is to maintain Oak to produce the maximum quantity and quality of sawtimber and veneer within ecological and economic limitations, and maintain the wildlife and mast-producing benefits. The higher quality Oak sites may also be candidates for extended rotation, thereby contributing to age class diversification within the Oak type. Oak stands targeted for extended rotation will be identified when they are scheduled for treatment. On nutrient poor, droughty soils with Northern Pin Oak stands, clearcutting will be used to regenerate a component of Oak along with Aspen, White Birch, Jack Pine, and/or Red and White Pine.

The County Forest stands managed today originated after the logging and wildfires of the late 1800's through the early 1900's. They are for the most part even-aged. Forest cover types of species that are shade tolerant and longer-lived provide opportunities to move individual stands to an uneven age or an all-age condition. These opportunities occur primarily in the Northern Hardwood and White Pine cover types. The decision to diversify the age class within individual stands will be made on a case-by-case basis at the time of a scheduled harvest, considering the capabilities of the site and available economic resources.

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

- Conduct the 2020 scheduled timber harvest of approximately 1,348 acres. The acres to be treated by timber type are: Aspen 333 acres; Cedar 12 acres; Hemlock 7 acres; Red Maple 1 acre; Northern Hardwoods 155 acres; Oak 168 acres; Jack Pine 68 acres; Red Pine 347 acres; White Pine 127 acres; Black Spruce 104 acres; Swamp Conifers 13 acres; Swamp Hardwoods 6 acres; White Spruce 7 acres. A detailed listing of the Forest Stands scheduled for treatment and the treatment types is attached.
- Continue the routine updating of the Forest Reconnaissance Information, approximately 2,000+ acres each year. A detailed listing of Compartment Stands is available at the Forestry Office.
- Prepare the Spring 2021 Timber Sales. There are 1,349 acres scheduled for treatment. Timber sale treatments will include:
 - **Aspen**-322 acres of coppice regeneration harvest
 - **Red Pine**- 9 acres harvesting of scattered mature trees, 363 acres of thinning, 13 acres of

shelterwood harvest

- **White Pine-** 49 acres of thinning, 14 acres of sanitation cutting, 123 acres of overstory removal
- **Jack Pine-** 73 acres of clear-cut relying on planting or direct seeding, 14 acres of thinning,
- **Black Spruce-** 43 acres of clear-cut relying on planting or direct seeding
- **Oak-** 20 acres thinning, 20 acres of shelterwood harvest, 24 acres of overstory removal, 106 acres of single tree selection harvest
- **Northern Hardwoods-** 36 acres of shelterwood harvest, 120 acres of single tree selection harvest
- The acres not ready for harvest will be deferred and rescheduled. See the attached 2021 Harvest Schedule.
- Coordinate with WDNR Liaison for assistance of 910 work-hours per year, which includes specialist assistance for disease and insect surveys, training, wildfire prevention & suppression, equipment operation for site preparation, and trail & road rehabilitation.
- Contract for and plant approximately 73 acres of Jack Pine plantations.
- Contract for chemical site preparation, approximately 182 acres.
- Contract for and/or complete mechanical site preparation, approximately 195 acres.
- Supervise site preparation for natural regeneration, 109 acres.
- Oversee the administration of Timber Sale Contracts, (approximately 25) including the scaling and billing of wood products and documentation of contract activity.
- Supervise the survey of regeneration and plantations for survival, approximately 1,000 acres.
- Supervise the documentation, sales, and permitting for firewood gathering, camping, maps, air photos, and Christmas trees & boughs.
- Administer the documentation and issuance of logging access permits to protect the County Forest property when private landowners need access through the County Forest Land in the course of managing their private timber resources.
- Administer the documentation and issuance of disabled access permits on the County Forest for individuals with mobility disabilities.
- Investigate the possible conversion of Aspen stands growing on sandy, excessively drained soils or growing under a canopy of Red and White Pine
- Administer all uses on the County Forest to meet the Certification requirements under the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Take corrective actions recommended by the Wisconsin DNR, WCFA legislative and Certification Committee, and approved by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and/or Forest Stewardship Council, to maintain compliance based on 2018 FSC and SFI audit results.
- Update the 15 Year Management Plan as changing conditions arise.
- Investigate and address forest health issues (including invasive species) as they arise and continue monitoring of Spruce Budworm and Oak Wilt.
- Develop an interactive mapping tool of trail assessments for the use of Power-Driven Mobility Devices (PDMDs) for disabled access on the County Forest. Continue trail assessments for appropriate use of PDMDs on County Forest trails based on environmental and safety criteria.

186 COUNTY FOREST ROADS

- 187
- 188 • Inspect and determine the needs for the maintenance and improvement of the 48.43-mile
 - 189 County Forest Road System.
 - 190 • Coordinate with the Vilas County Highway Department and/or Parks and Recreation
 - 191 Administrator for the grading of the 48.43-mile County Forest Road system in spring and
 - 192 fall.
 - 193 • Schedule and/or contract with private business and/or Highway Dept. for patch gravel, side-
 - 194 brushing and other maintenance needs within the budget.
 - 195 • Document work on County Forest Roads.

196

197 LAND

- 198
- 199 • Contract for the certified survey of County Forest boundary lines, including the
 - 200 establishment of corners and witnesses, necessary to conduct the establishment of timber
 - 201 sales; approximately 2 miles.
 - 202 • Continue the scheduled maintenance of the County Forest boundary lines and corners which
 - 203 have been established via certified survey or by agreement. Approximately 20-30 miles of
 - 204 boundary lines and associated corners are inspected and painted each year.
 - 205 • Administer access requests, access permits (notice renewals; issue new), resolve boundary
 - 206 disputes, encroachments and mismeander of Scat Lake in Sec.9, T.40N.-R.9E.
 - 207 • Continue planning and collaboration with stakeholders, including the towns, to propose and
 - 208 develop recreational trails and policies to the Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee.
 - 209 • Administer the disposition of lands acquired by Vilas County through tax delinquency.
 - 210 • Contract for environmental assessments of parcels prior to court action.
 - 211 • Locate parcels and mark for public identification (erect “For Sale” signs).
 - 212 • With the assistance of the Finance Committee and Finance Director, determine any land
 - 213 management activities that will enhance the sale of tax deed parcels and increase County
 - 214 income.
 - 215 • Prepare approved parcels for public auction by sealed bid.
 - 216 • Conduct the transfer of ownership and maintain records.
 - 217 • Conduct activities to dispose of small parcels and private road accesses assumed by tax
 - 218 delinquent status.

219

220 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

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222 Supervise and plan for the improvement and maintenance of:

- 223 • 1/3 of the Habitat/Hiking Trail System, approximately 36 miles of mowing including the
- 224 associated wildlife openings and parking areas. The specific units and maps are available
- 225 in the Forestry Office.
- 226 • Maintain Habitat/Hiking Trail Unit signage.
- 227 • Determine and plan treatment of wildlife openings to control invasive plant species and
- 228 planting to clover. The specific locations are yet to be determined.
- 229 • Coordinate with the Wisconsin – DNR, a Kirtland’s Warbler habitat restoration plan and
- 230 treatment on Jack Pine regeneration.

- Determine the needs for berm/gate maintenance and gate installation.
- Maintain the deer enclosure fencing surrounding 4 sites planted to enhance wildlife food and cover under the electric transmission line.

LEASES

- Renegotiate lease terms with FAA for Stormy Lake Radar Beacon.
- Oldenburg Sports Park: Administer the lease agreements. Act as Vilas County liaison with the Headwaters Youth Soccer Association and the Softball Association.
- Fairgrounds: Oversee the lease agreements. Act as Vilas County liaison with the Fair Board and Tennis Association.

RECREATION

Supervise activity related to the Vilas County Outdoor Recreation Plan (VCORP) and all activities of employees engaged in maintenance, improvement, development or administration of projects within the plan. This supervision will include work and activities both on County lands and on projects undertaken by external partners including local municipalities and established user groups. Supervision shall include supervision of the associated staff as approved and assigned by the Forestry, Recreation, and Land Committee.

Supervise activity related to planning, maintenance, and development of County-owned recreation facilities including:

- Sixteen (16) picnic areas with three (3) beaches.
- Ten (10) boat landings.
- Six (6) panfishing piers.
- One (1) shooting range.
- Thirty-eight (38) camping sites.
- Cranberry Island Recreation Site.
- Continue development of the River Road equestrian facilities and Torch Lake Park and Campground and RV Park.
- Establish planning for future facilities and assist with budgeting, grant applications and capital improvement plans to meet VCORP and 15 Year Forest Management Plan Goals.
- Oldenburg Sports Park- as needed outside of lease arrangements
- Oldenburg Sports Park- as needed outside of lease arrangements
- Radio Flyers Park Area- as needed outside of lease arrangements
- Lac Vieux Desert Park
- Eagle Lake Park
- All lands designated as Parks & Recreational Lands by action of the Forestry, Recreation, and Land Committee.

TRAILS PROGRAMS

Supervise the administration and coordination of the Snowmobile Trails Program, ATV Trails Program, bicycle trail and equestrian trail development and other trails that may be part of the

VCORP. Supervision shall include supervision of the associated staff as approved and assigned by the Forestry, Recreation, and Land Committee.

- Contracts for the maintenance of the Funded Snowmobile Trail System – 481.1 miles.
- Contract administration and trail inspections.
- Records income and disbursements.
- Administration of trail development projects.
- Administration and contracting of the construction/rehabilitation of recreational bridges, trail development projects and trail reroutes.
- Contract and administration of the maintenance of the Funded ATV Trail System- 40.6 miles.
- Oversee expansion and grooming of the X-C Ski Trail System, 8.6 miles. (Pioneer Creek CC Ski Trail)
- Coordinate development of County recreational trails plan with assistance from North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.
- ATV trails Administration: Apply for funding and contract for maintenance and development of ATV trails per Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee and County Board approval. Administration of any development projects.
- Oversight and collaboration of maintenance of designated equestrian trails - 25 miles (Ski Hill, Torch Lake and Pioneer Creek Loops).
- Establish planning for future trail needs and assist with budgeting and grant applications to meet VCORP and 15 Year Forest Management Plan Goals.

RECORDS

- The Forest Administrator is responsible for the maintenance of the operations records for: Forest Management, Forest Certification, Logger Certification, County Lands (including lands obtained by tax deed and sold), Access Permits and Easements, Fish & Wildlife Conservation Projects, and the Buildings & Equipment of the Department. Insure that all activities including recreation and trails programs meet documentation requirements under the Wisconsin County Forest Program, Forest Certification Standards Agreements, and applicable County, State and Federal Regulations.

FORESTRY, RECREATION, & LAND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Create the agendas for all Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee meetings.
- Prepare and distribute information to the Committee regarding Department activities, resolutions to be brought before the County Board, correspondence and requests for action.
- Record and maintain a copy of Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee meeting minutes.

ORGANIZATION INVOLVEMENT; TRAINING/CONTINUING EDUCATION

- Maintain involvement and support of Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA).
- Continue participation on the WCFA Legislative and Certification Committee.
- Continue involvement with Trees for Tomorrow.
- Attend seminars on current knowledge and application of forest science through the

- Society of American Foresters, WDNR, University Extension, etc.
- Attend safety and personnel workshops offered by Vilas County.
 - Coordinate services for and from other County departments.

STAFF

- Supervise Department staff of Assistant Forest Administrator, Forestry Technician-Timber, Administrative Assistant II and other staff as assigned by the Forestry, Recreation, and Land Committee.
- Maintain one (1) summer Forestry LTE position and oversight of that position.
- Coordinate with Recreational Officer and Sheriff's Department for enforcement of County ordinances on the County Forest and other assigned properties.

BUDGET

- Prepare the Department Monthly Budget Summary for review by staff and the Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee.
- Prepare the 2021 Forestry, Recreation and Lands Budgets.

PREPARE THE DEPARTMENT "ANNUAL REPORT OF OPERATIONS"

PREPARE AND FINALIZE THE VILAS COUNTY FOREST 15-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-2035

HOST THE ANNUAL WORK PLANNING MEETING WITH WDNR FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE PERSONNEL

COMPLETE PLANNING AND ACT AS HOST OF THE 2020 WISCONSIN COUNTY FOREST ASSOCIATION SUMMER TOUR WITHIN VILAS COUNTY

MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT, & FACILITIES

- Prepare an annual inventory of equipment.
- Determine needs for maintenance and replacement of tools, equipment, etc.
- Contact Public Property Committee regarding infrastructure needs. Projects: replace concrete to walkway and building apron to improve safety, complete installation of apron on new storage building, complete replacement of office and work-bench lighting with LED fixtures.

Submitted and approved by Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee

Steve Doyen, Chair

Date